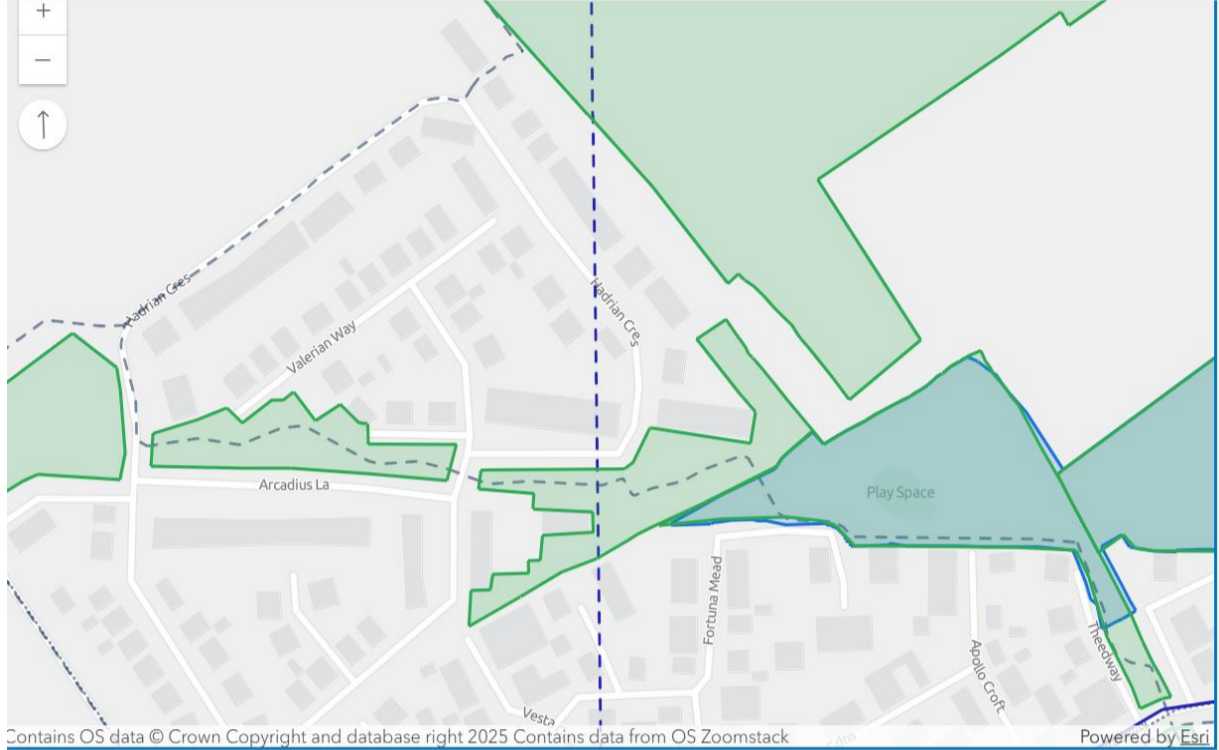


LEIGHTON-LINSLADE TOWN COUNCIL

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REGULATION 14 COMMENTS

General Comment	Reasons
<p>I would like to request that the fields adjacent to Linslade Wood and Soulbury Road are included in the plan as green spaces.</p>	<p>Looking at appendix D many of the reasons why Linslade Wood has been included equally apply to these fields, namely:-</p> <p>High wildlife value – core is ‘Ancient Semi - Natural Woodland’, and site is a County Wildlife Site. Core part of habitat network identified in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy. There is a wide range of wildlife using this site.</p> <p>Landscape value – important feature of Wooded Greensand Ridge, prominent in the local landscape when viewed from many directions. Building on the fields will indeed be a prominent feature on the skyline.</p> <p>User experience is one of tranquillity and intimacy through woodland paths and rides. These will be lost on the paths next to the fields if they are developed.</p> <p>Tranquil away from road and rail. The woods will not be tranquil if they are next to major residential development.</p>
<p>I am writing in response to the consultation on the Leighton Linslade Neighbourhood Plan with regard specifically to the 'local green spaces' section.</p> <p>I would like to request that the plan includes the fields adjacent to Linslade Wood and Soulbury Road as green spaces since many of the reasons for including Linslade Wood (Appendix D of the plan) apply to these fields also.</p>	<p>As a result of being adjacent to ‘Ancient Semi - Natural Woodland’, and a County Wildlife Site these fields have a high wildlife value. Indeed, the fields surrounding the woodland encourage foxes, deer, badgers, birds and insects to enter local gardens and roads, after emerging from the woodlands. On a daily basis, my wife and I have the pleasure of seeing many small birds including blue tits, great tits and goldfinches at our back garden feeder. We enjoy hearing owl calls at night and I was pleasantly surprised while returning home one evening recently when a handsome fox crossed the road in front of me.</p> <p>Building on these fields will interfere with our views of the beautiful landscape comprising the Wooded Greensand Ridge and compromise our experience of the natural tranquillity when using the paths next to the fields.</p>
<p>I have attached my comments on the proposed plan.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Background p5 It is obviously talking about Leighton Buzzard although it is not stated at the beginning as the description that follows is about Leighton Buzzard. It goes on to say that Leighton Buzzard and Linslade were both called Leestone in the Domesday Book. Looking this up, Leighton Buzzard was Lestone and Linslade Lincelada. 2. It is very confused about the history of Linslade. Shouldn't there be some acknowledgement that Linslade was a separate settlement to the north with St Marys Church being the oldest church in the area. Linslade was situated where eventually the canal was dug so the population had to move. Linslade as we know it today wasn't there before that happened. St Mary's church therefore is not in Leighton Buzzard. It is in the parish of Leighton-Linslade. Copying something directly from the consultant's report without checking the facts isn't advisable. 3. The history of Linslade in particular appears to have been written by someone with little knowledge of its development. Perhaps just copying the passage written by the consultants was not a good idea. 4. Point 2.4 - the most up to date population is stated as 2002. This is incorrect. 5. L1 Linslade lies west of the river not just west of the canal. 6. L2 What is partial pedestrianisation? It is not exact enough. 7. L4 Linslade starts after the river and there are many services and shops in the region in Linslade up to the canal. Bridge Meadow should be defined as in the Linslade area and perhaps even in the Linslade Cluster, 8. L4 ii Repetition of ground floor level. Perhaps a more carefully proof reading of the entire document is required as this is not the only mistake. Has the whole process been too rushed? 9. L4 B Exactly which areas of parking are underutilised at the station? Those at ground level seem very busy. Was there a survey completed? 10. L5 It is not clear if a way is proposed through the site to enable buses to be removed from the High Street so enabling the part pedestrianisation proposed. 11. L7 Bideford Green has a social centre which is not on the list. Again, evidence that just copying consultants' information is not always the best idea. Bideford Gardens is referred to several times in the document but the details are missing.

<p>I attach comments on the current Neighbourhood Plan document. I do feel that it could have been a more polished document at this consultation stage!</p>	<p>There are two general matters which require attention;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The introduction includes virtually nothing on Linslade, as an important constituent part of Leighton-Linslade. Thus, while there is significant comment on the historical background to Leighton Buzzard, there is precious little on Linslade eg the ancient church of St Mary's and the national significance of this area in the early medieval period for pilgrimages to the Holy Well. The distinctiveness of Linslade and its separate existence as a town in its own right within a different administrative area (Buckinghamshire) until the local government changes in the 1960s is another relevant factor which gives rise to a remaining distinct Linslade character today. Linslade in this context is not Leighton Buzzard. 2. The draft regrettably has numerous typographical/formatting/spelling errors which should surely have been corrected prior to publication. For example, in the Profile section, the date to which a population of 42,392 is ascribed is clearly wrong, "active" is missing after "economically", and "group" needs to be pluralised in 2.13. LL3 D is another example where proof reading appears not to have been done. <p>A very significant matter which surely requires attention in the Plan, if only to recognise potential implications for Leighton-Linslade, relevant services and facilities, is the impact of any development on the Heath and Reach side of the parish boundary which has been strongly mooted in the past and is a live issue today. This surely cannot be ignored in view of its potential massive impact upon the town and its residents.</p>
	<p>POLICIES</p> <p>LL1 This states that Linslade lies west of the canal and Leighton Buzzard to the east. So what is the position of the land in-between? Historically, Linslade extends to the river.</p> <p>LL2 To achieve the objectives specified, it is highly desirable to make the town centre as accessible, family friendly and safe as reasonably possible for residents and visitors. In this context and given the environment and surrounds of the town centre, full pedestrianisation of the High Street would be an important and positive measure. This would enable the creation of a highly attractive area with strategic seating and greening to promote visits and social interaction as well as enhancing commercial prospects for businesses as is shown by examples elsewhere.</p> <p>LL3 Should this not also refer to the desirability of preserving valued views eg of All Saints Church as part of the town's overall heritage and appearance? Future developments should be required to have regard to this. In addition, more attention might usefully be given to enhancing canalside and, especially, riverside walks, this as part of a wider leisure strategy.</p> <p>LL4 There is no consideration given to the increasing issue of traffic congestion especially from the Wing Road roundabout, over the canal and river and along West Street. This essentially arises from the focussing of several major roads on to the Wing Road roundabout and the single bridge over the river and canal. This can only continue to deteriorate as the population grows. Although a difficult and major matter, should not consideration be given, especially in relation to new developments in the area, to the possibility of another bridge?</p> <p>LL5 This appears to omit two critical items:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The desirability of permeability of South Side for traffic from Lake Street to Church Square. This would also be essential to enhanced bus accessibility and effective pedestrianisation of the High Street. 2. Maintaining views of eg All Saints Church when considering development proposals as these form part of the town's historic heritage. <p>LL7 A small point but the Southcott Village Residents' Association Hall does not appear in the relevant list.</p>
	<p>LL9 There is at present a planning application for the development of houses on land north of Soulbury Road immediately adjacent to Linslade Wood. This follows the highly controversial inclusion of the site among those suitable for small and medium developments in the CBC Local Plan. Hundreds of local residents have shown their opposition to this proposed development (a previous proposal was also rejected on numerous grounds including landscape and urban sprawl issues and the present application is being strongly opposed especially on the grounds of the potential damage to the environment and ecology of Linslade Wood. Dependent on the progress of the present planning application and bearing in mind the current revision of the CBC Local Plan, this area would be a prime candidate for designation as an area of local greenspace, especially in view of the relatively recent designation of the Wood as a SANG with the additional considerations and protection involved.</p> <p>LL11 While the Plan makes much mention of cycling and wheeling, considerably more attention needs to be given to the safety and enhancement of pedestrian routes. This would be in accordance with CBC's view in their relevant plans that all routes will be realised with the needs of pedestrians forefront. This is a particular consideration in the extensive Bideford Green area of Linslade where a development housing several thousand people was created with the principal pedestrian ways being narrow footpaths between houses and green areas. These paths are extensively used including by children and parents going to/from the Lower Schools. Pavements are generally lacking with only narrow service strips beside the estate roads. These private footpaths are manifestly unsuitable for cycling as they are narrow and even two people passing going in opposite directions can be difficult. This aspect requires recognition in any relevant future planning. An earlier CBC survey on proposals for cycling routes in the area highlighted residents' considerable concerns (and opposition) to some of the relevant cycle route proposals as being both impractical and dangerous.</p>
	<p>Overall I found the local plan quite inspiring, particularly as it includes many of the aspirations of local people: eg -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A Neighbourhood Health Centre; 2. The enhancement of wetlands for public enjoyment; 3. Housing with 1 - 3 bedrooms; 4. Tree retention and planting; 4. Community and cultural infrastructure. <p>I particularly liked "seating for the mobility impaired "!</p> <p>What I could not see is how we get from here to there. How can this be achieved, with little commitment from health and Central Bedfordshire bodies?</p> <p>One small point - there is an area of waste land in Woodman Close which I feel would benefit from tree planting. At the moment it is not really available as public open space.</p>

Green Infrastructure	I live in the Roman Gate development and I'd like to see the entire area of land under the pylon be designated as LL9 Local Green Space, to give it greater protection than LL8 Green Infrastructure offers. There are two additional play parks in the neighbourhood that deserve that designation to be protected from developers, who have already tried to build on what we call Roman Gate Park. I see Roman Gate Park has been given LL9 status and I appreciate that as will the hundreds of families I represented when I was chair of the Roman Gate Action Group.
My additional comments relate to sections of road that have no pavement. These create a break in connectivity and often leave people with dangerous options for getting to where they want to go.	
Overall objectives all sound good.	
LL1 Centre of Town renewal	<p>“Developing creative and cultural experiential opportunities.....”</p> <p>It would be good given the recent demographic changes in the Town’s population for there to be a specific reference to the increase in ethnic/cultures, and the need to respond to that in terms of future developments/activities/shops etc.</p> <p>I did a quick ‘survey’ in the market in October 2024 and there were 40 different cultural backgrounds represented by people shopping in the Town that morning; many of whom had ‘migrated’ from far corners of Britain as well as far corners of the world!</p> <p>“History of the Parish...” yes, indeed. And also opportunities for people to learn about each other’s cultural “histories” to aid community understanding and cohesion.</p> <p>Support to the independent hospitality (food and drink) businesses in the Town necessary if the Town Centre is to stay alive and well.</p>
LL2 Town centre	<p>Agree a Neighbourhood Health Centre (if this materialises from government) would be excellent.</p> <p>I urge planning committee (CBC and Town Council) to resist giving planning permission to any more gambling outlets.</p> <p>The area on the bank of the river by the show ground mobiles with the broken down small ?pumphouse that could be renovated as a hot drinks (not alcohol) /small riverside seating area would be attractive.</p> <p>Parking: more EV charging parking spaces are needed .</p>
LL4 Linslade Cluster	<p>The Plan mentions access from Linslade to the Town Centre.</p> <p>Since the removal of the footbridge over the railway line in 2019 mobility access over the line is restricted. The Plan must include a Network Rail/CBC new mobility access gate from Southcourt Avenue to enable disabled people, parents/carers with small children/buggies; people’s carrying heavy bags on to platform 1 to access the lift over the railway line.</p>
LL5 Land South of the High Street	<p>The developments as listed are all important and needed.</p> <p>Community and arts group need more than a room or two but use of a building.</p>
LL6 Housing	<p>The need for social housing- council built/owned flats, & small properties is high now and is likely to increase; the Plan must reflect this.</p> <p>As the current government rolls out its plans to rehouse immigrants from hotels the Plan should take account of this and provide opportunities for asylum seekers to live & work in Leighton Buzzard.</p>

LL8 Green	<p>The world including the UK is now in a climate crisis: This Plan is ‘quiet’ about this!</p> <p>All the statements regarding improving biodiversity and mitigating the effects of flooding are welcome.</p> <p>Flooding, heat waves, drought and food shortages will increase in the next 10 years and will affect Leighton Linlade.</p> <p>It would be useful if this Neighbourhood Plan links with the aims of the Government’s own climate action plan ie Carbon Budget & Growth Delivery Plan (29 Oct 2025) . Although Govt plan is extremely/over optimistic about what it thinks it will achieve by 2050.</p> <p>There are at least 18 bee-friendly wildflower sites across the Town maintained by volunteers, mainly from South Beds Friends of the Earth; as well as other sites supported by Leighton Linlade In Bloom. These are not mentioned anywhere that I can see?</p> <p>The Plan should recognise this and include plans to support their work to the benefit of all residents.</p> <p>Tree planting: an increase in tree and hedge planting is urgently needed across Leighton Linlade as appropriate.</p>
LL14 Energy	<p>Steps in this area are welcomed.</p> <p>Insulating homes in Leighton Linlade is needed.</p>
General Comment	<p>I live in Wing and we use L-L as our prime location for shopping, leisure, train travel, etc, routinely travelling by car because of the lack of effective cycling or public transport options. I have been previously involved in the Ouzel Valley Park projects, the Leighton Green Wheel and Cycle Town proposals so have a background with the town and remain an interested observer. I have also specific interest in the relationship of Wing to Leighton, not least in regard to the emerging Buckinghamshire and Central Beds Local Plans and the latter’s ‘call for sites’ within which the land west of the Wing Road railway bridge has been offered up for development. My comments are therefore in this context.</p>
Policies	<p>I have been impressed by the overall analysis and resulting principles but feel that the generalities sometimes lack a positive message to encourage desired strategic outcomes. As an example, Policy LL11B seeks to prevent inhibiting the development of the Green Wheel rather than establishing a policy to actively enhance the completion of the route as depicted on the interactive map.</p>
Connectivity & Corridors	<p>Likewise there is much mention of the importance of individual site public access or biodiversity but little overt requirement for connectivity and corridors as policy rather than it being inferred or viewed such as through reference to the aspirations of the Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan. Leighton is perhaps unique in its access to greenspace from the centre of town northwards right up to Rushmere, but going south there is less contiguity. There is a real need to positively promote not just greenspace, but the potential for links from Parsons Close and the fairground area and canal district, south through the meadows in the ownership of the Greensand Trust & others, to connect to the Church and Grovebury meadows recently made more available for public access. A failure to put such connectivity into policy for development of any individual areas could permanently prevent the achievement of an integrated public and biodiversity network in the town. A good example in this vein is the approval of the Grovebury Road retail park across the desired route from the South Leighton development to the Tiddenfoot Park and access to the schools and leisure facilities in that area. The large green bridge there was constructed with a clear mandate to serve a substantially increased footfall that has not transpired because of this lack of connectivity.</p>
Land between railway and western bypass	<p>The plan is also largely silent on land between the railway and the western by-pass, other than recording its LL8 greenspace potential on the interactive map. As we are aware that this land has been submitted in the Central Beds ‘call for sites’, it has potential to be brought forward for development. Policies talk of the importance of access into town from outskirts and the Wing Road rail bridge is a significant choke point to that from the west. Should there be overt policy leading to consideration as to whether development of this area (or other areas) is potentially constrained by access and greenspace considerations, or clarity regarding the criteria that must be explicitly considered if it or others were to come forward for development?</p>
As above	<p>Likewise the plan is silent regarding land to the south of the southern by-pass and connectivity of this public access area to the town for the good of its residents.</p>
Conclusion	<p>My concerns are founded on the frequent difficulty of getting joined-up consideration since the replacement of the South Beds plans that drove much of the early Ouzel Valley work. A good example is the continued lack of a bridge across the A4146 western by-pass on the Wing to Leighton cycleway (item 26 on the Walking and Cycling Infrastructure). The decision to save cost by not constructing the designed structure has completely undermined the strategic aim of creating a ‘safe route to school’ and easy cycle access to the railway station so as to substantially reduce traffic through the railway bridge. The danger of crossing four lanes of dual carriage way at grade, and in close proximity to the restricted visibility of traffic turning at the roundabout, inhibits parents being prepared to allow their children to cycle to school. Likewise there were proposals at one point for a ‘park and walk’ scheme just west of the rail bridge to reduce the traffic pressures to the rail station and schools. To my mind these sort of deficits must be remedied by means of clear policies if the Plan Objective 5 is to be achieved via any approved further development to the west or elsewhere with similar constraints.</p>
Comment	<p>I welcome the policies and proposals in the Neighbourhood Plan, especially the proposals for south of the High Street, and around the canal and river. The other policies are also to be welcomed.</p>
Land at Stoke Road Leighton Linlade	<p>Register objection to the Town Council proposals for this land.</p>

Comment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •History: para.5 line 1 insert "Cross" after "Market". •Ditto: para 8 line 2 St Mary's Church is in Old Linslade (not Leighton Buzzard). Proposed addition: "St Mary's Church, built in 1151 by Simon de Beauchamp, is the oldest building in the Leighton-Linslade township", (i.e. 100 years older than All Saints Church). •Policy LL1 supported. Para 2 line 8 has a typo. •LL2: suggest the addition of a 6th bullet point; i.e. "maintaining the Georgian ambience of the High Street" •LL3: add in two new points: a) the opportunity to designate part of this area for Sports use, b) the urgent need for the redevelopment of this area to include decisive new walking and cycling links as called for in CBC's LCWIP. (Cycling/Walking policy document). •LL4: A ii. add. "A refreshment facility at or near the Station for travellers." •LL5: Strongly argue that the suggested 151 dwellings in the LSOHS redevelopment is far too high and is not justified in the document. An alternative figure of less than 100 is supported. •LL6: supported •LL7: The two local Councils have yet to plan for Community Hub facilities to match the growth of considerable new estates at the eastern and western edges of the town. •LL8: strongly support •LL9: strongly support •LL10: Looks ok •LL11: ditto •LL12: Add to 2: "with appropriate refreshment/kitchen provision" •LL13: support. •LL14: Looks ok.
Policy LL1: Centre of Town Renewal and Policy LL2: Leighton Buzzard Town Centre	There is a need for more shops in the town centre. Fewer vape shops, nail bars, mobile phone shops. More independent and specialist shops to attract shoppers and give the town a unique, exciting vibe that outsiders will want to visit.
Policy LL3: Bridge Meadow/Canal Quarter	More GP practices and services are needed, so I would welcome a new Neighbourhood Health Centre, especially if it was going to include a walk-in centre I would like to see the preservation of existing green spaces. I am therefore pleased to see that there does not appear to be any proposed development of the Ouzel Water meadows. This a beautiful, natural environment - a piece of countryside in the town – and needs no enhancement. On the other hand, I would welcome improvement of Area 1 and Area 2. I am not clear what if anything is being proposed about Area 3. However it is a residential area which has been there for decades and the families who live there are entitled to continue their way of life in a way which suits them and should not be expected to move out or change their accommodation just because some people might consider the area unsightly.
Policy LL4: Linslade Cluster	The suggestion of reducing the amount of car parking at the station is short-sighted. More and more people are coming to live on the new estates and many of those will be intending to commute to London. They will not all want to use the bus, meaning that the demand on car-parking is likely to increase. Any reduction in car-parking may result in pressure on parking spaces in local streets and town centre car parks. There needs to be additional car-parking in Linslade town centre to enable customers to access the local shops and take-aways. Despite living on the Leighton side of town, we use take-aways in Linslade (as they are better than the ones nearer to us) and it is not feasible to walk to Linslade to collect a take-away.
Policy LL5: Land South of the High Street	My concern about building homes behind the High Street would be that they would quickly complain that town centre pubs etc were too noisy, which could negatively impact local businesses and the evening economy. I am also concerned about how this residential area would be accessed. And I am completely not in favour of closing and redeveloping Duncombe Drive car park. This is the most well-used car park in the town, ideally placed for those visiting Parson's Close, especially for the Band concerts and splash park for which people often have a lot to carry (deck chairs, picnic, children's toys) and so providing extra car parking spaces somewhere else or using the multi-storey is not really a viable alternative. Any residential building must include ample car parking for residents. Any idea that the properties will be aimed at people who do not have/do not use cars (ie the provision of a lower parking standard) is unrealistic. People living in Leighton Buzzard need cars. We do not have (and never will have) enough shops for people not to need to visit Milton Keynes or Aylesbury for shopping. Both of these are accessible by bus, but it takes an hour to get there. Aylesbury is not accessible by train and Milton Keynes station is too far from the shops to be a realistic option. Likewise, people living here want to be able to enjoy the countryside, which is only possible with a car. How realistic is it to visit Ashridge, Ivinghoe Beacon, Dunstable Downs, Combe Hill, Wendover Woods etc by public transport at the weekends? Similarly people will want to have a car to go on holiday – not everyone goes abroad on holiday and the cost of using trains to get a family of 4 to Cornwall, for example, is prohibitive.
Policy LL6: Housing Mix and Type	The requirement to build accessible homes is to be welcomed. The housing mix should include bungalows. The conversion of bungalows into houses in various parts of the town reduces the number of bungalows available for people whose mobility needs mean that a bungalow would be the best option for them and developers are not currently including bungalows as part of their new-build offer. The Plan's figures show that the proportion of older residents in Leighton Buzzard has increased in recent years, meaning that the demand for bungalows is also likely to increase. It should also be remembered that not all older residents want or need to live in sheltered accommodation and many will wish to continue to have their own gardens. Similarly not all older people or other people who might need a bungalow want a small property, so there should be a range of 1-4 bedroom bungalows available in the town.
Policy LL7: Local Community Assets	I am pleased to see that the policy recognises the relative lack of community facilities and promotes the creation of new ones. As the policy states many of the existing facilities are privately owned or are aimed at specific areas/residents of the town. It would be nice to have the equivalent of a village hall (such as Billington has) which would be available for all.
Policy LL8: Green and Blue Infrastructure	The new Clipstone estate has a nice green space alongside Clipstone Brook. However, I believe it is still not possible to walk along the whole length of Clipstone Brook from Mead Way to the Clipstone Estate. The last time I walked from Mead Way along the brook towards the new estate, there was a fence preventing access to the length of the brook on the Clipstone estate
Policy LL11: Active Travel	Walking safety and Highway safety would be enhanced by a 20mph zone along the length of Vandyke Road. This road serves two schools and as such a very large number of children walk along it daily. The road, which is also a through-route out of Leighton Buzzard, is narrowed by parked cars, which reduces visibility. For the most part, students walk along the path responsibly but the footpaths are not really wide enough for the volume of young people. By contrast, Mentmore Road, which also serves two schools, is a dead end, has wider paths and a crossing warden – and is a 20 mph zone.

Policy LL12:Infrastructre Priorities	<p>Leighton Buzzard has wonderful provision of local community activities such as the Christmas Shopping weekend, carnival, May Fair etc and is a great community to live in. It could be further enhanced by better facilities so as mentioned above, I would welcome a neighbourhood Health Centre and a multi-purpose community space. I would also support the provision of the proposed spaces for exhibition of Leighton Buzzard's history, creative and cultural activities and additional sports facilities.</p> <p>The new blue plaque honouring Q Central is to be welcomed – but any proposed interpretation boards should not be in the area around the war memorial as this would detract from the special ambience of this area. Interpretation should be sited in a more general area in Church Square, as part of a general interpretation board about the town's history</p> <p>There should also be</p> <p>o an alteration of access to the retail park by the A505 by pass. The current configuration causes traffic problems - at some times of day traffic exiting to return to Leighton Buzzard struggles to turn right against the flow of traffic out of town, while traffic trying to get into town from the bypass gets backed up because of people waiting to turn right into the retail park</p> <p>o alterations to the Leighton Buzzard bypass (A505) which is not fit for the increased volume of traffic now using it to travel between Linslade bypass (A4146) and the new M1 junction. When built the Leighton bypass (A505) was intended as a local bypass not a major infrastructure route. Vehicles using the A505 bypass to travel between the motorway and Linslade bypass (A4146) fail to realise that the Leighton Buzzard bypass is not of the same standard as the A4146 and road out to the motorway (ie it is not fit for use as a 60/70mph access to the motorway) and do not moderate their speed or expectations. The bypass needs to be properly upgraded to reflect the increased traffic and properly regulate speed. This could be done by making it a proper dual carriageway or by physically narrowing lanes on the existing single carriageway, to prevent dangerous overtaking. Road markings are not sufficient to achieve this and alterations should include a central reservation, lowering speed limit etc</p>
I also noticed a couple of typographical errors. For example	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Title and Para 1.1 Should the date of the policy not be 2025-2042, not 2024-2042? • Para 2.4 The population of 42,392 was presumably in 2021 not 2002 • Policy LL9: Local Green Spaces no xxv – should read “Amenity Space between Regent Street & Miles Ave” – not “Regents Street”
Building in Leighton Buzzard	<p>I strongly object to any more building in Leighton Buzzard and especially in the town centre.</p> <p>It is a disgrace that we do not have a health hub or cottage hospital for the size of the population...Who ever is responsible for voting against this decision should be ashamed of themselves ☹️</p> <p>We are pensioners and are thinking of leaving LB for this reason.</p> <p>Nothing makes sense anymore..what happened to caring and looking after people over profit .</p>
Comment	<p>I am writing to submit formal representations on the draft Leighton-Linslade Neighbourhood Plan. While I fully support the intention to create a strong, community-driven vision for the future of the town, I have serious concerns that several areas of the plan do not yet offer sufficient protection for our natural environment, neighbourhood character, infrastructure capacity, or long-term sustainability.</p>
1. Ecological Protection & Green Spaces	<p>Main objection:</p> <p>The Plan does not adequately safeguard ecologically sensitive areas or provide strong enough policies to prevent habitat loss, fragmentation, or erosion of landscape character. This includes areas adjoining Linslade Wood, greenbelt edges, wildlife corridors, and semi-natural grassland.</p> <p>Concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Risk of harm to protected species and foraging habitats. - Insufficient policy wording to prevent incremental loss of greenfield sites. - Weak protection for Local Green Spaces and biodiversity-rich sites. - Lack of robust requirements for Biodiversity Net Gain on all developments. <p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengthen policy language to ensure no net loss of natural habitat and enforce measurable Biodiversity Net Gain. - Formally designate more Local Green Spaces and define clear ecological buffer zones. - Require ecological assessments and safeguarding measures for any proposal near woodland, hedgerows, watercourses, and wildlife corridors. - Provide a clear spatial strategy showing which land must not be released for development.
2. Landscape Character & Protection of Greenspace	<p>Main objection:</p> <p>The draft Plan does not sufficiently prevent the incremental urbanisation of the town's green edges or protect areas valued for their rural character, tranquillity, and visual amenity.</p> <p>Concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ongoing risk that greenbelt or greenfield locations may be considered for housing allocations despite overwhelming local resistance. - Policies lack clarity on preventing urban sprawl and maintaining distinct settlement boundaries. - Insufficient reference to preserving views, landscape setting, and rural identity. <p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengthen settlement boundary policies to resist development that erodes the rural character of outlying areas. - Explicitly protect sites of community landscape value (including land adjacent to Linslade Wood). - Adopt strong wording: “Development that harms the landscape setting or results in loss of significant greenspace will not be supported.”

<p>3. Transport, Highways & Active Travel Infrastructure</p>	<p>Main objection: Transport and movement policies are significantly underdeveloped, failing to address the reality of already-overburdened roads, unsafe cycling/walking networks, and limited public transport.</p> <p>Concerns: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developments risk generating unacceptable increases in traffic and congestion. - Many local roads (e.g., Soulbury Road) already experience safety issues. - Walking and cycling infrastructure is not aligned with national LTN1/20 standards. - The Plan lacks enforceable requirements for active travel, sustainable transport design, or safe school routes. </p> <p>Recommendations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Require all major developments to deliver active travel infrastructure first. - Reference national guidance (LTN1/20) and require compliance with safety and accessibility standards. - Ensure transport assessments fully evaluate cumulative impacts on junctions, air quality, parking, and safety. - Prioritise safe pedestrian and cycle links between new development, schools, and key services. </p>
<p>4. Infrastructure Capacity (Schools, Healthcare, Community Facilities)</p>	<p>Main objection: The Plan does not demonstrate how increased housing needs can be met without overwhelming local facilities and services.</p> <p>Concerns: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Existing schools, GP practices, dental services, and community amenities are already at or over capacity. - Reliance on financial contributions (e.g., Section 106) does not guarantee provision of actual facilities. - Lack of clear timing: infrastructure must be provided before or alongside development, not afterwards. </p> <p>Recommendations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Include stronger policies requiring evidence of realistic and deliverable infrastructure expansion. - Specify that development will only be supported where adequate health, education, drainage, and community facilities are in place. - Require transparent infrastructure phasing plans. </p>
<p>5. Housing Density, Design, and Overdevelopment</p>	<p>Main objection: Housing policies lack sufficient safeguards against inappropriate density, poor design, and loss of amenity for existing residents.</p> <p>Concerns: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Risk of high-density schemes inconsistent with surrounding character. - Insufficient separation buffers, especially near sensitive areas (e.g., woodland). - Overdevelopment leading to loss of privacy, overcrowding, and inadequate on-site green space. - Insufficient focus on climate-resilient design. </p> <p>Recommendations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduce maximum density guidelines for edge-of-settlement locations. - Require designs that enhance, not undermine, local character. - Strengthen requirements for on-site green infrastructure, tree planting, and climate-resilient energy efficiency. - Include a design code or pattern book guiding future development. </p>

6. Sustainability & Long-Term Environmental Stewardship	<p>Main objection: The Plan does not yet establish a strong enough strategy for long-term sustainability, climate resilience, or low-carbon development.</p> <p>Concerns: - Insufficient integration of climate mitigation and adaptation policies. - Lack of commitments to renewable energy, carbon-reduction, and sustainable construction standards. - No clear protection against developments that significantly increase pollution or reduce environmental quality.</p> <p>Recommendations: - Adopt policies that require: - Zero-carbon-ready development. - Tree planting and green infrastructure standards. - Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS). - Protection of dark skies and reduction of noise/light pollution. - Require larger developments to contribute to community renewable-energy generation.</p>
Conclusion	The Neighbourhood Plan represents an important opportunity to define the future of Leighton-Linslade, but it must clearly reflect the concerns expressed by residents, local groups, and environmental bodies. Stronger safeguards must be included to protect natural areas, limit inappropriate development, ensure high-quality infrastructure, and deliver transport and housing plans that genuinely support a sustainable future.
Comment	Outrageous. Many fine words but in essence just more accommodation with no commitment to improved infrastructure for health, well being, traffic, etc, etc.....
Comment	I'm a resident of Grove Road so live very close to the proposed development. It would be awesome if you could include some garages available to rent in the plan. There is a shortage of garage and workshop space in this area.
Comment	<p>As a Resident of linslade I am emailing you to inform you of my serious concerns and to make my objection to the development of the 151 flats south of the high street in Leighton buzzard. I have lived here for seven years. The lack of infrastructure in and around Leighton buzzard is at bursting point. Let me elaborate.</p> <p>Roads currently. The current road infrastructure can not cope with additional traffic. In the town centre it often takes in excess of 40 minutes to travel from linslade to Morrisons at certain points of the day. Secondly. On most days when travelling from lvinghoe to Leighton buzzard on the approach to the roundabout in Leighton buzzard before turning left towards linslade. You can sit here for in excess of 30 minutes. Backing up beyond the dangerous bends by the grove lock.</p> <p>Traffic travelling from the McDonald's roundabout towards the lvinghoe turning on the same junction as mentioned above can take in excess of 40 minutes at certain times of the day.</p> <p>Then let's look at other Infrastructure. Drs surgeries are at breaking point. With them now using the hub in Bassett road to try and elevate the pressure. Appointments are still over a week for non urgent appointments. Dental practice is impossible with me recently having to travel to London for treatment at a private clinic due to no availability locally.</p> <p>Town centre parking is already at maximum capacity. Flats without parking will push residents to other side streets causing a knock on effect to current residents. Since the parking restrictions in the town centre are premium rates. The sheer expansion of Leighton buzzard and the proposed development in heath and reach and other surrounding areas are not in proportion with the demands in our town and are not supported by the community. The lack of forward foresight is alarming that local council are not seeing this themselves.</p> <p>Infrastructure first in all future development before a single brick is placed must be the priority for any future councils and development within the Leighton buzzard and linslade areas.</p>
General Comment	<p>No new houses - no benefits for Leighton Linslade?</p> <p>Surely Leighton Linslade has in recent years had it's share of new housing. It's no longer that market town. New housing and development is ongoing. The sewerage and other services are stretched already without further housing.</p> <p>It's stated that a new health health centre will be built only if more housing is accepted , would that include doctors surgery? As we understand a new health centre was promised on a previous occasion but local authorities refused to fund or staff - monies were transferred to Houghton Regis, is it assured that funding will be provided on this occasion?</p> <p>Where is the under used parking at Leighton Buzzard station? Certainly there fewer cars parked on Fridays and weekends. If we are to encourage commuters from surrounding villages to shop in Leighton Buzzard and travel by train rather than drive to London or northwards parking is essential. Assuming the Government ledgislte to get more people back to their place of work rather than home parking facilities will be essential.</p> <p>Leighton Linslade has wonderful parks and green spaces but Parsons Close would benefit from more parking for Splash Park and Recreation area users.</p> <p>Access to Leighton Buzzard Station by road or on foot is adequate it is difficult to see how it could be improved.</p> <p>The Policy document is very wordy and long, the maps confusing for the lay person to understand. Without access to the internet the draft document could not be read in one session at the library or White House, this dose not encourage response from the inhabitants.</p>
General Comment	I would strongly request you make provision for a health hub in the centre of Leighton Buzzard, similar to the excellent one in Dunstable We do not need further housing and the town is crying out for a health hub. You have the land in an ideal location in the town which would be accessible for all. There are many other issues but I want to stress the most important need is the health hub so please make it available

General Comment	We are residents of Leighton-Linslade writing to share our comments on the (pre-submission) Leighton-Linslade Neighbourhood Plan which has recently been published for public consultation. Please extend our thanks to the Town Council for clearly publicising the plan and inviting residents' comments. As a general comment we think the plan is comprehensive and has clearly been carefully considered. Our comments, organised by section, are below:
Background	Final sentence of paragraph 5 should presumably refer to the Market Cross. Paragraph 11 should, I think, initially refer to the 2021 census as opposed to 2002.
Policy LL1 (Centre of Town)	We note the proposal to develop 400 new homes in this area with some concern: not about the land use, but rather with the fact that primary healthcare in the area is overburdened and has not kept pace with population growth. While the Plan indicates that a health centre is a 'priority', residents have been hearing about this for some time and, to our knowledge, firm plans have not yet materialised. Our opinion is that the expansion of healthcare services, to meet the need of the existing population, should precede new housing development insofar as this is financially viable. We suggest that the town council carefully consider the impact of developing any housing around the train station, with respect to the ease of accessing the station by foot, wheelchair, cycle, pick-up/drop-off, or public transport. This is in view of the high cost of paying for both parking and rail for London commuters, as well as congestion and environmental impacts.
Policy LL2 (Leighton Bizzard Town Centre)	We particularly appreciate the 'no through traffic' element of this area and the part-pedestrianisation on market days, and suggest this be explicitly protected going forwards. We oppose the use of central locations for retailers that solely or largely cater to the vaping or betting industries, both on public health grounds and because we believe it seriously detracts from the town's character.
Policy LL6 (Housing Type and Mix)	We believe that the target of 50% of new residential properties being 'smaller' (1-3 bedroom) is too low a proportion to aim for — 70% would seem more reasonable. While there are numerous downsides to additional residential development (congestion, local service strain etc.), we do believe that some of this can be tolerated if this provides affordable housing for those who need it. However, developments that contain a large proportion of 4+ bedroom houses are clearly not targeted in this way. ONS statistics (see table 5) indicate that, at a national level, only 8% of households contain more than 4 people. These therefore cannot be reasonably said to represent 'affordable' housing. We suggest that due consideration is given to the amount of off-road/allocated parking space apportioned per dwelling. With most working families (outside of urban centres) requiring two cars, inadequate allocated parking usually leads to parked-up streets and congestion.
Policy LL7 (Community Assets)	We particularly welcome the commitment to re-developing or re-purposing the Tiddenfoot Leisure Centre site for class E(d)/F1/F2 use. We suggest the town council review if any of these sites that are in public ownership could feasibly be designated as 'Warm Spaces' as per the CBC list. We note that Leighton-Linslade only has one entry on that list which is Tiddenfoot Leisure Centre (so due to close and also not very central).
Policy LL9 (Local Green Spaces)	We note that Parson's Close recreation ground and the park adjacent to St Barnabas church are not listed. We assume this may be a technicality of how these spaces are defined but we would, in any case, advocate for their protection as green spaces (in general terms).
General Comment	Thanks for the chance to comment on the draft Leighton-Linslade Neighbourhood Plan (LLNP). I hope you have had a good range of responses and interest in the Neighbourhood Plan. I am commenting both on behalf of the community group, Totally Leighton Buzzard (who run the Repair Cafe LB) and also as an individual resident of the town. I really appreciate that the town council have put a lot of thought, time and effort into the draft document but I also want to share some constructive comments which hopefully you will find helpful to make it overall the best document possible.
Perceived strengths of the LLNP:	Heritage-led renewal: Policies LL1 to LL5 place heritage and town centre identity at the heart of regeneration, which is a distinctive strength. Green & Blue Infrastructure LL8: Mapping biodiversity opportunities and linking to the Greensand Ridge Nature Improvement Area is forward-thinking. Active travel LL11: Explicit support for walking, cycling, and bus improvements aligns with national priorities and sustainability. Energy efficiency LL14: Requiring "zero carbon ready" design and post-occupancy evaluation is more ambitious than many Neighbourhood Plans.

Overall Vision of the LLNP:

Whilst I like the current vision "A 21st century market town that thrives on the strength of its heritage, community, environment and entrepreneurs/creatives". I think it could be improved and enhanced as follows:

"Leighton Buzzard will continue to be a thriving, welcoming, inclusive 21st century market town - a jewel of Bedfordshire on the edge of the Greensand Ridge - that honours its heritage, adapts to climate change, and nurtures nature, community, sustainability, entrepreneurialism, and creativity and provides modern amenities and meets evolving needs of its population and surrounding area. A town with a strong pride of place, where people of all generations want to visit, work, live and flourish."

Areas for constructive comment and suggested amendments:

Having taken the time to look at some sample pre-existing Neighbourhood Plans to identify any comparison points eg Frome, Totnes, Wickham Market, Newmarket and Market Drayton Neighbourhood Plans, I suggest the following actions to fill gaps in information and improve the documents presentation:

1. More clearly distinguish through colour coded boxes and headings the policy matters and community actions under each policy objective (as per Newmarket's NP document layout)
2. Include a table of all recommended community actions summarising key asks eg health hub, community creatice hub in centre of town (see Market Drayton NP document)
3. Include a distinct section on "Pedestrian Safety and Accessibility" and on visual gateways and signage in the town.
4. Include a summary section covering core infrastructure for the town
5. I also think you should include a section on the economy, employment and industrial sectors and how new and growing businesses will be supported in the town. This feels like a big gap. The town isn't only about housing, parks etc. The economy is only mentioned in relation to the town centre but what about the key employers and industrial parks on edge of town etc, the town's heritage as a sand town and modern job opportunities?
6. Suggest including more reference to enhancing tourism for the town eg there is currently only 1 key hotel - The Swan and you make no reference to heritage assets eg Mary Norton connection, light railway or to the town heritage trails or links to Greensand Ridge walk start or to opportunities afforded by potential Universal Studios build. How can Leighton Linslade capitalise on that?
7. Some strategically placed photos to visually represent key points would also improve the document.

Other Comments	<p>Housing affordability & mix Policy LL6: Commend the emphasis on smaller homes and adaptable design but suggest: Clearer targets for affordable housing delivery (e.g., % of new homes at social rent or shared ownership). and also encourage stronger links to local employment and younger demographics to balance the ageing population.</p> <p>Climate resilience: LL14 is strong, but the plan could set measurable carbon reduction targets (e.g., % of homes built to Passivhaus standard by 2030). Flood risk policies LL3 could be expanded to require nature-based solutions across all new developments. see also above on circular economy and repair and reuse a also note that Newmarket's NP refers to setting up a community energy initiative. Leighton Linslade already has this in place but again there is no mention of this or how it can be developed further.</p> <p>Community infrastructure LL12: The plan identifies priorities (health centre, cultural space, indoor sports hall), but lacks delivery mechanisms. Suggest binding commitments to secure developer contributions or community ownership models.</p> <p>Ambition in town centre renewal LL1 to LL5: The vision is compelling, but implementation depends heavily on Central Bedfordshire Council. Recommend stronger phasing and funding strategies, plus measurable outcomes (e.g., vacancy rate reduction, % increase in evening economy footfall). is there more that can be mentioned in the plan to encourage better range of shops and businesses rather than nail bars, hairdressers and vape shops - the current shopping mix does not encourage people to visit the town centre.</p> <p>Local Green Spaces LL9: Commend the breadth of designations. Suggest adding management plans or biodiversity net gain requirements to ensure these spaces thrive long-term.</p> <p>Comparison with Other Neighbourhood Plans Ambition: LLNP is above average in energy efficiency and biodiversity (many plans stop at general aspirations).</p>
General Comment	I would like to congratulate the Town Council on this impressive piece of work which reflects broad and deep public consultation and community engagement. I am supportive of the plan (and have suggested some improvements below to strengthen some areas) and look forward these principles guiding the future evolution of the town subject to resident approval.
Policy LL1 – Centre of Town Renewal	<p>Very positive content in this policy and particularly the key principles around supporting the town centre as a community hub, supporting a rich mix of different offerings in the town centre, and the focus on space for creativity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •I would suggest that principle H regarding Land South of the High Street is amended to include specific mention of 'health facilities' as while I think this is implicit in mention of 'vital local services' it would be good to be crystal clear to reflect the importance of this. •P10 – I would suggest amending this sentence to : With the current government commitment to introducing new Neighbourhood Health Centres, these central locations are ideal for siting a new health hub, neighbourhood health centre or health facility bringing additional healthcare services as a priority to bring better access to health in the town.
Policy LL2: LEIGHTON BUZZARD TOWN CENTRE	<p>some very positive principles and aspirations in here particularly in supporting the vibrancy and variety of our town centre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Could B be amended to say: 'Proposals for new community and social infrastructure uses, including health and wellbeing and cultural uses defined under class E(c)(d)(e)(f), F1, F2(b) and appropriate Sui Generis* uses will be supported on both ground and upper floors where it can be demonstrated that the use of the building(s) contribute to the vibrancy of the town centre or where the proposed use will enhance the vitality of the town centre by extending the range of facilities and additional health services offered and/or stimulating activity for the evening economy.' •Could F be amended to include reflection of the importance of making sure any lighting is in keeping with the policies and principles in the Spatial Plan? Some shop displays are garish, out of keeping and use video/live TV which is not in keeping with the heritage of the market town. I would encourage better, in keeping lighting to make the High Street more welcoming.
Policy LL3: BRIDGE MEADOW/CANAL QUARTER	<p>some very positive policies here and I would emphasise the importance of improving active travel opportunities around the canal and improving access to the towpath.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •I would also encourage specific mention of additional crossing points for walking/wheeling over the canal. •I welcome the consideration given to flood risk in this section and would emphasise as is in the Plan the importance of any development being resilient to flood risk, and also suggest adding mention of ensuring that any development does not increase or exacerbate flood risk elsewhere in the area.
Policy LL4: LINSLADE CLUSTER	the proposals in here around active travel and more sustainable modes of travel to and from the station are very positive.

Policy LL5: LAND SOUTH OF THE HIGH STREET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •I would suggest changing this paragraph to: The Neighbourhood Plan allocates approximately 2.65 hectares of land to the south of the High Street, as shown on the Policies Map, for a comprehensive, mixed-use development including cultural, health and community facilities and up to 151 dwellings; the residential element comprising a mix of 1- and 2-bedroom apartments as set out in the “Land South of High Street Spatial Framework” (Appendix B) •I would suggest changing A) to: They deliver key community facilities, particularly supporting health, cultural and small business, and particularly a new health hub, Neighbourhood Health Centre (following new policy from the current government), or health facility bringing additional health facilities to the town. •I would suggest amending this section on p16 to: It is accepted that a level of enabling residential development will be needed in order to fund the community benefits envisaged for the site which include: 1) A Health Hub, Neighbourhood Health Centre or health facility bringing additional healthcare services to the town •I am pleased to see recognition that any residential development on this site should ensure a similar amount of public parking available, and should not result in the unintended consequence of creating additional parking pressures on surrounding roads as this is very important to town centre residents. •I would like to see C and D amended to also include a commitment to ‘improved’ walking routes because those that currently exist between Land South and the High Street (as is recognised in the Land South Spatial framework, are currently uninviting and poorly maintained (this is recognised in the LS Spatial Framework). •Is it possible to mention (from the Land South Spatial framework) the creation of a restricted low traffic service road to allow for potential wider pedestrianisation of the High Street.
Policy LL6: HOUSING MIX AND TYPE	I welcome the recognition of the importance of accessible and adaptable dwellings in this section and would encourage all dwellings to be delivered to M4 (2) or M4 (3) standards.
Policy LL7: LOCAL COMMUNITY ASSETS	I support this section and would request that in addition the Leighton Buzzard Library be provided the strongest possible protection.
Policy LL8: GREEN AND BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE	Some very positive proposals in here. Is it possible to emphasise the link between Green and Blue infrastructure and active travel? I would hope that active travel and green and blue infrastructure can be mutually reinforcing – ensuring there are good active travel routes through these areas where appropriate can ensure they deliver wellbeing and health benefits for local residents. These areas are also important for ensuring walking and wheeling routes away from traffic/pollution etc.
Policy LL9: LOCAL GREEN SPACES	<p>I very much support this list of assets to be protected.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •I want to express my strong support for the inclusion of xxxviii) Aurora Rise Informal Recreation Space which is also known as ‘land under the pylons’, a site that is shaped as a double triangle adjacent to Apollo Croft. This is a vital recreation and green space to residents on Roman Gate which has faced planning applications in the past and which it is vital to protect. •I understand Parsons Close Recreation Ground is protected by various covenants and so this may not be necessary but has adding this site to the list been considered?
Policy LL11: ACTIVE TRAVEL	<p>I am supportive of these policies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Is it possible to strengthen references to the LCWIP and make it clear that development should not adversely impact the delivery of this, and also to establish that developments that offer opportunities to deliver the LCWIP would be supported (subject to compliance with the other policies in the Plan).
Policy LL12: INFRASTRUCTURE PRIORITIES	•Can this item be amended as follows: The Neighbourhood Plan identifies the following priorities to create additional social infrastructure within the town: 1) A new Health Hub, Neighbourhood Health Centre or health facility bringing additional health facilities to the town.
Policy LL14: ENERGY EFFICIENCY	some very positive policies in here.
General Comment	<p>I moved to Leighton some 12 years ago, and have to a greater extent enjoyed living here.</p> <p>However, as a resident I despair of the lack of good community facilities. The recent use of the old Wilko building as an art and community space helped to highlight this gap in town amenities. I'm not convinced that as the plan stands this will happen The cultural and community facilities within the plan are not on CBC land but private land. I think this rests too much on the goodwill of private land owners and developers and the provision of these cultural and community facilities will be negotiated out of existence. The only place for such an amenity must surely be in the heart of our community, and ideally in the high street, as a firm immovable proposal. With the right management this could not only be an important building for our community it could, and should, make a financial contribution to its running costs. It will also build everyone's sense of belonging to the town, and with the inevitable expansion of the town's population we need to build our community roots.</p>
General comment	<p>I attach the response from South Bedfordshire Friends of the Earth for the Neighbourhood Plan Consultation.</p> <p>South Bedfordshire Friends of the Earth has a membership of 61 local residents who are volunteers. The community group work is carried out under a formal partnership agreement with National Friends of the Earth.</p>

<p>The vision: “A 21st century market town that thrives on the strength of its heritage, community, environment and entrepreneurs/creatives.”</p>	<p>South Bedfordshire Friends of the Earth is disappointed that all mention of low carbon and green economy are left out of this vision. This leaves the plan far behind the aspirations of the town , what the community has achieved, and the UK’s legal targets on Climate Change. LLTC passed a Climate Emergency in 2021. There have been many public meetings organised by the Low Carbon Leighton Linslade since 2016. Leighton Buzzard has two wind turbines one of which was granted permission in 2017 when no other wind turbines were being given permission. LB was a leader in battery technology in 2014 with the Super Battery on South Street. Marigold House Care Home is one of the very few Care Homes in the UK to be Passive Haus. The town was a bee friendly town in 2013, was a case study for the National Pollinator Strategy in 2014 and Keep the Buzz in Leighton Buzzard was awarded a “Bees Needs Award “from DEFRA in 2017. Dash Direct Bus service was an award-winning bus service in 2011 that cut traffic on southern Leighton Buzzard by 17% above the TRICS assessment. The town was part of a special project of Cycle Town 2009-2011. The town has always been a market town for food and has a farmers market, and market supplying local vegetables and farm produce which is low carbon. Local Food shops such as the Refill Shop provide good quality very affordable local food without waste. Several shops in the town provide refill facilities.</p> <p>Objectives</p> <p>Following on from the comments on the vision the Neighbourhood Plan’s Objectives are very disappointing in that they do not reflect some of the town’s strengths and also in that they only ask for a very small amount of change when a step change in a range of areas is crucial.</p> <p>1. To promote Leighton Buzzard Town Centre as a modern market town, with a vibrant daytime and evening economy; developing creative and cultural experiential opportunities along a strong retail offer.</p> <p>It is good that it mentions creative but it does not mention local food. Leighton Buzzard has been the hub for local farms and had a market for a 100 years and especially with shops like the health food shops and the Refill Store is a place to get good quality food. Nor does it mention low carbon or green skills. Following the comments above, with two wind turbines, and shops like the Refill Shop which is bigger than the Refill Shop in Totnes, the Repair Café, library of things, an unusually high amount of cycle shops per capita, this objective really misses the future of the town. Nor does it mention building on our heritage such as Q Central and Alice Chaucer.</p> <p>2. To expand the range of social infrastructure to promote good health, reduce social isolation and encourage community cohesion.</p> <p>There needs to be a Step Change in the provision of social infrastructure not just expand as that could be very little and it needs to include all ages. A health facility is crucial. Considering both the need in the town for hospital services which can be outsourced and the proven record of social and cultural activities in reducing demand on the NHS, the objectives need to include a health facility to Community and Arts. This is also crucial to reduce emissions for the travelling for health appointments outside the town.</p> <p>3. To ensure new development promotes high standard in design, including maximising energy efficiency measures. This is not nearly strong enough and will be less than the legislation. The government announced in June that the Future Homes Standard will include solar panels as well as heat pumps and high insulation levels. There are huge opportunities with the locally owned wind turbines in the town and recent location of the National Energy Efficiency Centre.</p> <p>4. To promote active travel opportunities, improving connectivity between the town centre and the wider community, reducing congestion and encouraging reduced use of the private car for short journeys. Again this is alarmingly weak. It is very worrying that buses have not even been mentioned. Buses from new estates need to be every half hour with clear publicity. Congestion</p>
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<p>Policy LL8 Green and Blue Infrastructure.</p>	<p>This is a very disappointing policy considering all the work on green infrastructure including the Blue Lens study and the challenges of flooding and drought with Climate Change. It also fails to record some of the real biodiversity highlights within the town and huge amount of work from the community especially Friends of Leighton Linslade in Bloom and South Bedfordshire Friends of the Earth and the work done by LLTC</p> <p>There is no mention of biodiversity targets and urban heat and very little or no mention on flood reduction, carbon storage, water quality and including biodiversity within housebuilding and the immediate streets.</p> <p>South Bedfordshire Friends of the Earth have created and managed 17 bee friendly areas around the town including a community orchard, hedges including apple trees and wildflower/bee friendly habitats.</p> <p>Leighton Linslade in Bloom have created wonderful areas of flowers that support pollinators.</p> <p>There is no mapping of these areas and so the opportunity to link in these areas to each other and build on this is lost. The area on Soulbury Road Bank between Knaves Hill and St Mary's Way have a unusually high number grasshoppers as well as a range of butterflies and solitary bees and Vandyke Curve beside the Narrow Gauge railway has an unusually high and diverse mix of wildflowers according to one of the Bedfordshire Natural History Recorders yet neither of these are recorded. The Leighton Linslade in Bloom gardens which are rich in Pollinators are not recorded and the area of Linslade Memorial Playing Fields with hedges and wildflowers and the Gardens of Remembrance are not recorded, even though they play a major role in helping pollinators.</p> <p>The policy does not mention urban heat and planting within developments. TCPA Biodiversity by Design 2006 explains how creepers on houses and planting within streets can mitigate urban heat and cold and flooding. Yet there is no mention of biodiversity within the dense areas of housing.</p> <p>The policy does not mention biodiversity targets. The UK is one of the most nature depleted countries in the world. In England, the Government has set a world-leading, legally binding target to halt the decline in species abundance by 2030 and to tackle some of the biggest pressures on our environment and to effectively conserve and manage at least 30% of land and 30% of ocean ('30 by 30') https://uk.chm-cbd.net/sites/gb/files/2025-04/31.03.2025_UK_National_Biodiversity_Strategy_and_Action_Plan.pdf</p> <p>A report in the House of Commons Library explains this very clearly https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/biodiversity-loss-uk-international-obligations/</p> <p>In England the Environment Act 2021, and subsequent regulations, set legally binding biodiversity targets, which will contribute to meeting international obligations. The targets are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to reduce the risk of species going extinct in 2042, compared with 2022 • to create or restore 500,000 hectares of wildlife-rich habitats by 2042 • to ensure overall species abundance is increasing rather than decreasing by 2030, and increases by 10% by 2042, compared with 2030 <p>This is an addition to the commitment the government has made to meet the CBD's 30 by 30 target. In December 2023, Natural England summarised the measures the UK is taking to meet 30 by 30, which include creating a Nature Recovery Network and strengthening the remit of National Parks and National Landscapes to support nature recovery.</p> <p>The Environment Act 2021 targets are supported by a series of interim targets (to 2028), as set out in the government's 2023 Environment Improvement Plan.</p>
<p>Local Greenspaces policy LL9 Comments by South Beds Friends of the Earth.</p>	<p>We support all the areas listed here although we are concerned that Mill Road greenspace is not listed for Appraisal nor is the area opposite Leighton Middle School nor the bank on Soulbury Road and Knaves and St Marys Way.</p> <p>We are especially concerned that in the appendix D that wildlife summarised as (e) in the table is not mentioned for these following areas.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No 61 Amenity space between Regent Street and Miles Avenue which has been managed by a community group who have created pollinator friendly wildflower areas has not mention of wildlife. . 2. It is even more worrying that Linslade Gardens of Remembrance no21 are not mentioned for wildlife considering that the garden maintained by South Beds FoE is managed for pollinators and wildlife. Linslade Memorial Playing Fields have a wildflower area where surveys have taken place and The National Tree Council planted a hedge beside the wharf in order to support wildlife but wildlife is not listed as a criteria. 3. Adam's Bottom no 74 does not mention wildlife in the criteria but has three wildlife friendly areas; along the stream, by the wall and an area of native shrubs with long grass which is excellent for hibernating insects. These are managed by South Beds Friends of the Earth for wildlife. 4. Vandyke loop meadow no 75 is a wildflower meadow managed by South Beds Friends of the Earth. There is not space for recreation as listed in the criteria It is not safe being adjacent to the railway and also it would destroy the wildflower area. 5. Stanbridge Meadows, no 44 does not mention the Astral Park Community Orchard, which although it is part of the Country Wildlife Site for Stanbridge Meadows is owned by the town council unlike Stanbridge meadows and is managed by South Bedfordshire Friends of the Earth and has a rich abundance of Butterflies due to the long grass, agrimony, knapweed and wild carrot and arich abundance of birds due to the hawthorn scattered throughout the site. <p>Mill Road greenspace is not mentioned. It should be one of the local greenspaces. It is a really important greenspace for local people and has a wildflower area beside the play area and is great for bees and butterflies.</p> <p>We are presuming that the area opposite Leighton Middle school on the bank of the River Ouzel which now has a rich collection of wildflowers including marshwoundwort, flag irises, hemp agrimony Marsh Margiold and shrubs such as Spindle and Guelder Rose and is managed by South Beds Friends of the Earth is protected. We are presuming that Riverside Walk is protected.</p>

Energy efficiency and climate change.	<p>It is very good that there is a policy on energy efficiency, however with LLTC having declared a climate emergency it seems very odd that there is not a policy on renewable energy which is both encouraging microgeneration and storage as well as taking advantage of the renewable energy in the area so that this town can be a leader in renewables. Solar panels and battery storage can significantly reduce pressure on the grid and reduce energy costs and reduce carbon emissions.</p> <p>There is a need to look at overall electricity supply in the area. The changes in the grid with decarbonisation of the grid by 2030 should be considered as well as the opportunities created by the wind turbines adjacent to the parish which are already feeding into Clarence Road. This town has two wind turbines and has planning permission for a third. It also has a superbattery which was the first of its kind in 2014 and a significant amount of solar farms in the vicinity. There is the opportunity for all new developments to be leaders in renewable energy technology and low bills for customers.</p> <p>There also should be a motion about working with Buzz Community Energy and local organisations like Grundfos and The National Energy Efficiency Centre which is based in Leighton Buzzard on the wider agenda of retrofitting existing housing stock with both insulation and renewables. There should be a policy that new development should contribute to support green skills and retrofitting of existing housing stock.</p> <p>There should be a policy for an ambition for work on Local Area Energy Plan for Leighton Buzzard so that the town can significantly reduce its demand for electricity, the price of local electricity and its carbon emissions.</p> <p>There should be a policy for new commercial premises to work with renewable energy providers so that new industry is powered directly from local renewable energy.</p> <p>There should be active support for a renewable energy charging station of HGVs in light of all the logistics in the area.</p>
LL14 ; Energy Efficiency.	<p>This is a good policy on energy efficiency and covers a range of areas but it will need to relate to the Future Homes Strategy with the emphasis on solar panels which is not mentioned in the policy. This policy might conflict with the new Future Homes Strategy. The policy should also refer to the UK's national and legally binding carbon targets.</p> <p>The policy on layout and landscaping should include creepers and shrubs etc. Creepers on houses or living walls can reduce temperatures by 2degrees according to the research done by TCPA "Biodiversity by Design" TCPA</p>
General comment	<p>Though there are many worthy aspirations, this Neighbourhood Plan is seriously lacking in ambition and misses some key needs of the town especially on health and lacks an understanding of some key elements of Leighton Buzzard. It also displays a lack of awareness of the changes that will happen as the country follows its legal commitments under the Climate Change Act</p>
Health Issues.	<p>The plan does not reflect the need for improved health facilities. The Objectives of the plan are weak on health. LL12 does not define a Neighbourhood Health centre, with the result that the Neighbourhood Health Centre is merely a renaming of what we already have. Furthermore the proposed locations for a Neighbourhood Health Centre in LL5 are on private land without parking which could cause serious problems. LL3 could be so far into the future that it is unlikely to happen. Also Bridge Meadows is much more difficult to access by public transport and active travel than the Land South of the High Street.</p> <p>I have three key concerns;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Without a more detailed definition of a Health Centre there is a real risk that the key demands of the Health Provision Group which is for localised hospital services, such as blood tests, minor injuries, diabetic clinics, ultrasound scans, xrays etc are ignored and something much less than this is provided. A Neighbourhood Health Centre is described a place that brings together NHS services and Adult social care and community organisations. It also helps people to deal with unemployment and housing. Although it can contain some specialist services it is mainly aimed at social care and GPs and the community. https://www.england.nhs.uk/london/2025/10/08/neighbourhood-health-services-bringing-care-to-londoners-doors/ Already there is a virtual project in Leighton Buzzard where social care and GPs work together. The health centre in Bassets Road will probably fulfil this as it can link into the virtual project. A Neighbourhood Health Centre could end up as so much less than the Health Provision Group have asked for. It is crucial that some more description of the aims from the Health Provision Group. The term Neighbourhood Health Centre without any description as well as missing the key hospital services that are needed also really misses the opportunity to copy the model of the ELFT facility at Bromley By Bow led by Dr Sir Sam Everington where art, community and health professionals worked together eg where people with depression were given free courses in silk screening for example and there were many cooking classes bringing people together from various cultures reducing social isolation which is very damaging to health. This model could easily be implemented in Leighton Buzzard town where arts and community from LB Arts Society, to the Community Agents employed by LLTC, to Men in Sheds and the Repair café as well as support for the Leighton Linslade Homeless service can be used. Arts on Prescription have been proved to reduce demand for GP appointments by 37% according to the All Party Parliamentary Group on Creative Health 2017. There were plans (a detailed business case following an Expression of Interest) by St Vincent De Paul to run a community hub with the food bank run by Leighton Linslade Homeless Service in the Riverside Building. There was significant support and desire to use the community hub with regular sessions from Citizens Advice who are very short of space to see people face to face, CBC Housing who do not have an office in Leighton Buzzard, and the Children's Centre who wanted to do more outreach and the CBC skills and employment centre. South Side Studios in the last year did a report which was widely shared with Councillors showing how community arts, artists studios can work together can work together in a building. There was significant support from the PCN which is reflected in the report. This is attached. The other extremely worrying issue is that in the spatial framework for Land South of the High Street, the Neighbourhood Health Hub is placed on private land far from any parking. Or it is placed in Bridge Meadows where there are many years left to run on the leases and also is far from the town centre and so the town centre does not get the benefit of the visitors and the Health hub does not get the benefit of being in the middle of the community and activities.
Community and Cultural Infrastructure. Reference mainly to policy LL12 and the objectives and LL1 and the overall document.	<p>The use of the word space rather than a building really undermines the ability of any of these facilities to be financially self sustaining and hence last long term. Also the term space could just mean a display board in a public place. This policy also leaves out many of the needs of the Community</p>

<p>“Space”</p>	<p>The policy states</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A multi-purpose space that can host large-scale meetings and events. 2. An exhibition space to display Leighton Buzzard’s history. 3. A space for creative and cultural activities. <p>1. The word space can be very concerning as linked to the objective To celebrate local heritage through recognition of key buildings and locations, as well as the creation of dedicated space to display the history of the parish, it could mean just a large display board. Space can mean a very small area tucked under or above a shop or flat.</p> <p>Neither the town council nor CBC have the money to take on the maintenance of, the running costs and the management of these spaces. Running “a space” on its own would be very difficult and expensive. The only way that these functions will succeed is if there is a building that can house heritage, and creative and cultural space along with space to rent out for local groups and also to commercial organisations and a café/ bar and souvenir/ tourist shop so that the building is financially self sustaining so it can pay for the maintenance and running costs and a manager. A large space for meetings which is really needed in the town centre could be combined with a new town council chamber which is large enough to fit in everyone rather than having to travel to Astral park which is a walk from any buses.</p> <p>There have been excellent examples of this type of financially self sustaining building in Crawley where the Brorough Council have let out the top floor of their building to a solicitors firm which pays for the studios for local community arts groups on the floor below and then the council offices are below. Brighton Council gave a building to Dance Space. One floor contains offices rented at a commercial rent and board room which is let out to companies. This floors pays for rehearsal studios and a small performance space/ studio in the rest of the building meaning that it can serve the rest of the building.</p> <p>The Peppercorn group who are aiming for an Arts centre with exhibition space for art and heritage and a performance space with a café/ bar and rehearsal rooms to let out have done two feasibility studies about creating a building that pays for itself and a programme manager. One was for a new build. The second one was for repurposing part of a retail property in the town centre. South Side Studios also produced a feasibility study for a new building with studios, community arts and rooms for the NHS which would cover running and maintenance costs and also a manager.</p> <p>Policy LL12 does not cover organisations like The Library of Things and the Repair café and Men in Sheds which really need a permanent home. Nor does it cover Freddie and Friends who really need a permanent base. It also does not cover the need for a base for CBC outreach like housing and adult skills and childrens services and outreach from Citizens Advice who are short of space. Also Leighton Linsalde Homeless Service who take referrals from Citizens Advice and housing and social services only have very temporary premises. There is also a huge demand for a place with kitchens so that there could be cooking lessons for those on low budgets and also cooking together for cultural integration which is becoming increasingly needed. Much of the community need has been left out.</p>
<p>Town Centre</p>	<p>The objectives and policies around the town centre cover some of the aspirations such as creative entrepreneurs , however they miss a key part of the town. It is still a town where people buy food on the market and at the bakers, Refill shop, coffee shop etc and also everyday items such as CeeJays, Selections and TK Furniture, carpets and blinds etc . Although some of Leighton Buzzard’s residents are affluent there is significant section who are on low income and for whom low cost food shopping is crucially important and the market and local food shops provide that. Also the town centre has always been a place that food has come into. The farmers market and local fruit and veg and local food overall should be much more promoted. With Climate Change and the low carbon agenda, local food and reducing food miles will be increasingly important.</p> <p>Supporting the green economy with the repair café and the library of things etc should be included.</p> <p>Under culture , performance space should be seen as important as there is a significant shortage of performance space in the town centre.</p> <p>Activities including children’s toddler groups and experience should be highlighted as part of the town centre as they bring in footfall to the town centre.</p> <p>The challenges of the Out of Town Retail Park on Grovebury Road with free parking need to be explored . The retail park was predicted by its developers to take £2 million a year of trade from the town centre and that was before change of use to include food stores. Also the competition of Bletchley retail parks with free parking and MK shopping centre with a wide choice of shops need to be considered. In light of this, some free parking in the town centre is really needed.</p> <p>Also more importantly to reduce congestion and reduce carbon and to attract people into the town, there needs to be a step change in sustainable travel choices so that cycling and walking and buses are a real option.</p> <p>Overall it is crucial that enough is going on in the town to attract people in to visit it and it needs to be easy to access.</p>

Community Engagement	<p>The community engagement has been poor. The document is hard to understand and engage with, which has put off many people. I have found it has taken me an exceptionally long time to get my head around. The language is vague and so the document needs a significant amount of reading to understand its strengths and weaknesses.</p> <p>Several members of Community groups and key members of the community were asked to take part in the Neighbourhood Plan process. There was a complicated and lengthy process of applying to be accepted by the town council onto sub groups working on different subjects. There was a special launch of the subgroups and the promise of several meetings. However instead there was just one meeting arranged at short notice just to discuss a way forward and then there was no further contact from the town council. It was not a good way to treat community groups.</p> <p>There have been many consultations on many parts of this plan and I am concerned that these previous consultation have not been used as a basis. I also feel that there is severe consultation fatigue. There were consultations by CBC on the Community plan in 2017, the Land South of the High street and town centre 2019, the CBC local plan in 2019 – 2020, the land south of the High Street in 2023. Then in the summer of 2023 there was a consultation by LLTC on land south of the High street in the Library and there has not been an official response to that. So yet another consultation coming on top of this has made it hard for people to engage.</p> <p>There has also been significant work by different groups on various aspects of this plan such as the Land South of the High Street working group before 2023 and all the work of the Health Provision Group. This has not been taken account of. The work of Community groups such as In Bloom, South Beds Friends of the Earth, Freddie and Friends, Men in Sheds, Buzz Community energy, the History Society, Leighton Linslade Homeless Service and many others has not been taken account of. There are several policies on space for arts and culture but none of the feasibility studies that community groups have raised the money seem to have been read by the authors of the Neighbourhood Plan.</p>
Green and Blue Infrastructure LL8 and local green spaces.	<p>This document builds on some of the good work that has been done through the Blue Lens study and the emphasis on river corridors, BNG within the town etc is very good. However there are some significant omissions.</p> <p>1. There are no targets for biodiversity improvement in this plan.</p> <p>This Government has committed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •to reduce the risk of species going extinct in 2042, compared with 2022 •to create or restore 500,000 hectares of wildlife-rich habitats by 2042 •to ensure overall species abundance is increasing rather than decreasing by 2030, and increases by 10% by 2042, compared with 2030 •to effectively conserve and manage at least 30% of land and 30% of ocean by 2030. <p>In order to effectively improve the biodiversity in Leighton Buzzard, there need to be targets for increasing habitats, which habitats need to be increased, and which species are being encouraged. The town has won awards for pollinators and the town council does not use peat or glyphosate which really damages pollinators. It would be very good to build on this and build on which bird species should supported as well as other mammals. Sadly the gardens created and managed by Leighton Linslade in Bloom which is very helpful to pollinators are not mapped. Most of the sites that South Beds Friends of the Earth have created and look after to support pollinators and birds are not mapped. There should be detailed mapping of these areas and the work that the town council have done in order to be able to connect up these areas and really gain ecological enhancement.</p> <p>2. I think that it is very worrying that St Barnabas Recreation area with the beautiful Leighton Linslade in Bloom garden is not mapped, nor is in the local greenspaces. There could be through section 106 a plan to enhance the biodiversity of the parks by building on the areas of rich biodiversity; so Section 106 could pay for the creation of an area of long grasses with some nettles to support the butterflies that visit the flowers in the area managed by in Bloom. There could also be shrubs planted to support the wildlife visiting the garden and an area of early spring bulbs to help emerging bumble bees.</p> <p>3. The plan also misses the opportunity to actively work on improving the water quality of the brook and river and strive towards a target. This does involve working with land owners, agencies and Anglian Water and planting purifying plants and creating ponds etc. This will also help with reducing flooding.</p>
Reducing Carbon Emissions. Policies on renewables and energy efficiency.	<p>This town council declared a climate emergency in 2021 yet little has happened. The UK government has committed to a reduction in emissions of 81% by 2030. The government is also committed to decarbonising the grid by 2030. The Committee on Climate Change has highlighted that transport is a major sector for emissions and needs to be tackled.</p> <p>The town stands out for the consented wind turbines that surround it, the battery at woodman Close, and a huge range of other low carbon opportunities.</p> <p>In light of this, there should be new policies in the Neighbourhood Plan on renewable energy and retrofitting through working in partnership with other organisations.</p> <p>The policy on energy efficiency is good but needs to be aligned with the Future Homes Standard and the route to net zero under the 2008 Climate Change act.</p> <p>There should be policies to support green skills etc.</p>
Active Travel	<p>The Committee on Climate Change highlight the importance of reducing emissions from transport as does CBC's Sustainability Plan.</p> <p>The town also suffers from severe congestion and buses and active travel can reduce traffic by up to 21%. Buses play a major role in reducing social isolation and in keeping elderly people active. There needs to be a step change in modal shift (20% above the TRICS assessment) A 17% reduction in traffic above the TRICS assessment was achieved through the Dash Direct.</p> <p>With new developments, cycle links and footways should be phased at the start. The Eastern Development has shown up the failures in the planning system. Roads are linked in from the start, you do not see an estate build with ransom strips so that roads in the estate can be joined to the wider network. So in light of this, why cannot the cycle ways and their links to the wider network be established at the first phase of the development. Buses need to be every half hour with simple to understand routes that are publicised in many different places. Also the neighbourhood plan needs to demand the links are supported from the estate through to destinations so Scholars Way on the green wheel is made a priority.</p>
Boundaries	<p>The Neighbourhood plan really highlights the need to look at the governance and boundaries of LLTC. LLTC will be requiring section 106 for developments that are using the town centre but are not within the parish boundary. There needs to be policy on this.</p>
Feasibility Study	<p>Feasibility study that South Side Studios commissioned which could be so useful for land South of the High Street</p>